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ABSTRACT

Following up on similar studies done in 1971 and 1982-83, a study surveyed American journalists in 1992 to develop a statistical profile of the "typical" journalist and to see how today's journalists compare with those of 10 or 20 years ago. Telephone interviews were conducted during the summer of 1992 with 1410 journalists. Subjects in the main probability sample of 1156 were chosen randomly from news organizations also selected randomly; response rate was 81%. Overall finding (using preliminary data) was that, although the past decade has seen great changes in journalism and the larger society, and although there has been some change and progress among American journalists, it has also been a period of little growth in overall numbers and limited change in the representation of women and minorities in journalism. The "typical" American journalist in 1992 is a white Protestant male with a bachelor's degree from a public college, is 36 years old and married, earns $31,000 a year, has 12 years experience, does not belong to a journalism association, and works for a medium-sized group-owned daily newspaper. Although there are substantial numbers of women, non-Whites, and non-Protestants working for a wide variety of small and large news media, stalled growth in media employment appears to have affected the representation of women. A bachelor's degree has become the minimum qualification necessary for practicing journalism, although only at daily newspapers is the journalism degree becoming the norm. (Contains 38 statistical graphs.) (NKA)

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ED 361 702

The American Journalist in the 1990s

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Presented at the 43rd annual conference of the International Communication Association in Washington D.C., May 27-31, 1993. David Weaver is Roy W. Howard Research Professor at Indiana, where G. Cleveland Wilhoit is professor of journalism and associate director of the Institute for Advanced Study.

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The professionalism of American journalism continues to be debated in these times of great change in the world. In the past decade, as never before, the news and the journalists who produce it increasingly have become center-stage in American life. The "professional spirit" of journalists detected in Frank Luther Mott's classic history of American journalism, and in the ideas of Pulitzer and the founders of the first schools of journalism, has not been forgotten, but has never been fully developed, as documented in the 1971 national study of 1,328 U.S. journalists by Johnstone and colleagues,[1] and by our 1982-83 follow-up study of 1,001.[2]

Nearly a decade has passed since the data were collected for our study of U.S. journalists in 1982-83, which was funded by the Gannett Foundation and which resulted in *The American Journalist* --a book that has been widely cited and used by those in journalism and in journalism education.

During this time, great changes have occurred in journalism and in the larger society. Even more dramatic changes have occurred since the 1971 benchmark study. These changes include the wholesale adoption of new technologies that have changed not only the speed of transmission of news, but also its nature.

But what of American journalists? Have they, too, changed dramatically in the past decade? As the following preliminary findings will suggest, the answer is both "yes" and "no," but mostly "no." The past decade has been one of some change, and some progress, among mainstream American journalists, but it has also been a period of little growth in overall numbers and limited change in the representation of women and minorities.

Methods

Because this study was intended to be a follow-up to the 1971 and the 1982-83 national telephone surveys of U.S. journalists, we followed closely the definitions of a journalist and the sampling methods used by these earlier studies to be able to compare our 1992 results directly with those of 1971 and 1982. We also used many of the same questions asked in these previous studies, but we added some questions to reflect the changes in journalism and the larger society in the past decade.

Unlike the previous two studies, however, we deliberately oversampled journalists from the four main minority groups--Asian Americans, Black Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans--to ensure adequate numbers for comparison with each other and with White journalists. We kept these oversamples of minority journalists separate from the main probability sample when making comparisons with the earlier studies.

The findings that we report here come from 45-minute telephone interviews with 1,410 U.S. journalists working for a wide variety of daily and weekly newspapers, radio and television stations, and news services and magazines throughout the United States. These interviews were conducted by telephone from June 12 to September 12, 1992, by trained interviewers at the Center for Survey Research at Indiana University's Bloomington campus.

Journalists in the main probability sample of 1,156 were chosen randomly from news organizations that were also selected at random from listings in various directories.[3] The response rate for this sample was 81 percent, and the maximum sampling error at the 95% level of confidence is plus or minus 3 percentage points. It is, of course, higher for the individual media groups.

Journalists Interviewed in 1992 Main Probability Sample

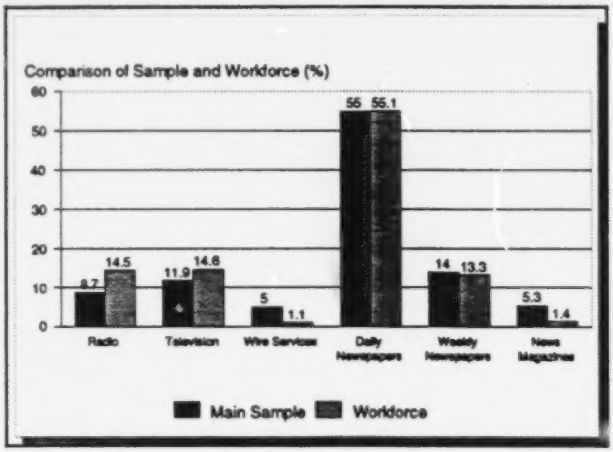
Medium	*Number*
Daily Newspapers	636
Weekly Newspapers	162
News Magazines	61
News Services	58
Television	138
Radio	101
TOTAL	1156

The oversample of 254 minority journalists was chosen randomly from the membership lists of the four main minority journalism groups--the Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA), the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ), the National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ), and the Native American Journalists Association (NAJA). The response rate for this oversample was 61 percent, and the maximum possible sampling error is just above 6 percentage points, but higher for the individual minority groups.

Race of Journalists Interviewed from 1992 Total Sample

Race	*Number*
White	1053
Asian	100
Black	77
Hispanic	80
Native American	84
Not Identified	16
TOTAL	1410

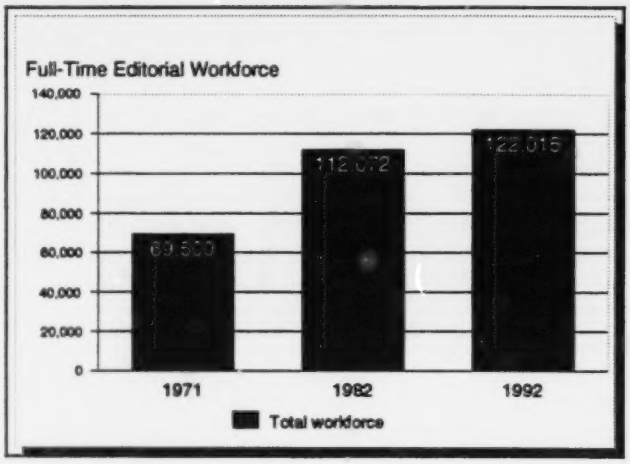
In drawing these samples, we had to make estimates of how many full-time journalists were working in general interest mainstream news media in the United States. We compared our final main sample percentages with the overall workforce percentages from these estimates, and found that we had slightly undersampled radio and television journalists by deliberately oversampling wire service and news magazine journalists to have enough from the wires (58) and news magazines (61) to analyze. But no group was either under or oversampled by more than 6 percentage points.



General Characteristics of Journalists

Our first finding from these estimates was that there has been very little growth in the number of full-time journalists in the past decade, as compared with the previous one. In fact, slightly less than 10,000 more full-time journalists are working for mainstream news media in the U.S. in 1992 as compared with 1982, a growth rate of just under 9 percent, as compared with a growth of 42,572 full-time journalists between 1971 and 1982, or a 61 percent increase. In terms of overall growth, then, the past decade has been one of very little change for American journalists.

But who are these journalists in 1992? As in 1982, it is difficult to talk in general terms about the "typical" U.S. journalist, because there are more than 122,000 of them. It may be said from our 1992 national survey that the typical U.S. journalist is a white Protestant male who has a bachelor's degree from a public college, is married, 36 years old, earns about $31,000 a year, has worked in journalism about 12 years, does not belong to a journalism association, and works for a medium-sized (42 journalists) group-owned daily newspaper. But such a picture is inadequate.



Statistical Profile of the "Typical" U.S. Journalist

Daily newspaper journalist -- 55%
Married -- 60%
36 years old (median)
Male -- 66%
White -- 92%
Protestant -- 54%
Has a Bachelor's degree -- 82%
Attended a public college -- 57%
Did not major in journalism -- 61%
Works at group or chain owned organization -- 65%
Works with a news staff of 42 (median)
Earns $31,297 (median)
Has worked in journalism 12 years (median)
Does not belong to a journalism organization -- 64%

As our findings will show, there are substantial numbers of women, non-Whites, non-Protestants, single, young and old, and relatively rich and poor journalists working in this country for a wide variety of small and large news media, both group and singly owned.

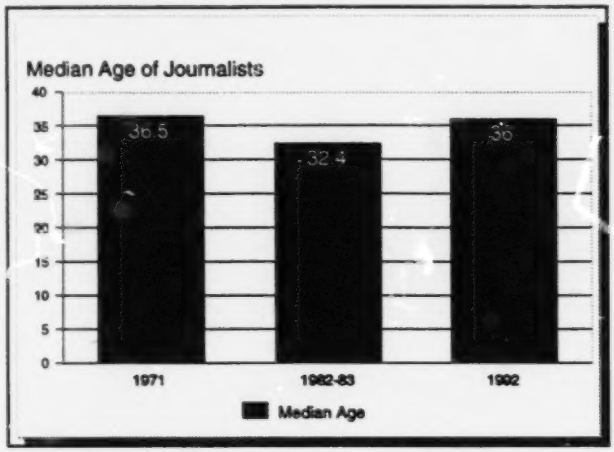
Many of these journalists differ from this profile of the typical journalist. For example, Black and Asian journalists are more likely to be women than men, not to be married, to have higher incomes ($37,000 - $42,000) than the typical journalist, to have worked in journalism 10 or 11 years, to be members of at least one journalism association, and to work for larger (100-150 journalists) daily newspapers.

Hispanic journalists are more likely to be Catholic than Protestant, and to be more similar to Blacks and Asians than to the "typical" U.S. journalist on other characteristics. Native American journalists are more likely to be of some other religion besides Protestant or Catholic, to make much less than the other groups (median income of $22,000), and to work for very small newspapers or television stations (3 or 4 journalists).

Women journalists in general are likely to have worked in journalism three years less than men, to have somewhat lower incomes (about $27,000 a year), to be about a year younger than men, not to be married, and to be much more likely to identify with the Democratic Party than men.

But how do the journalists of today compare with those of 10 or 20 years ago?

To begin, let's look at the median, or middle, age of U.S. journalists. It's risen to 36 years old, about where it was in 1971, from a drop to almost 32 in 1982. In general, then, American journalists are getting older on the average, or they are returning to where they were 20 years ago, before the massive hiring of young people during the 1970s. This is especially true for print journalists, whose median age is 37, compared to broadcast, where it is only 32.



This aging of American journalists is more dramatically illustrated by looking at the proportions in each age group. Those under 24 years old have shrunk to only about 4 percent of all journalists, down dramatically from nearly 12 percent in both 1971 and 1982, mainly because of the small growth in number of new jobs during the 1980s.

Age Distribution of U.S. Journalistic Workforce (Percentage in Each Group)

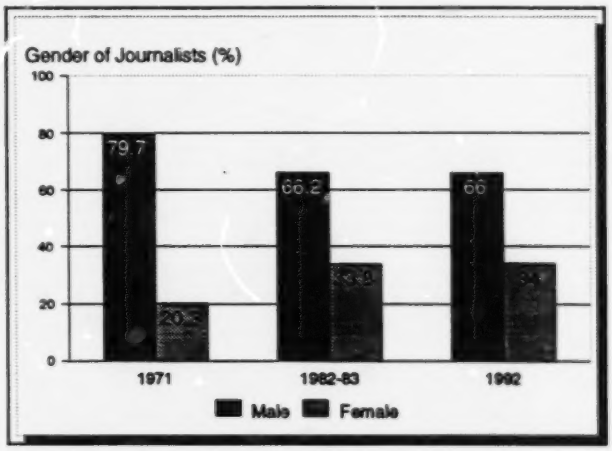
Age Group	*1971*	*1982-83*	*1992*
Under 24	12.0	11.8	4.1
25-34	33.3	44.9	37.2
35-44	22.2	21.0	36.7
45-54	18.8	10.9	13.9
55-64	11.3	8.9	6.6
65 and older	2.3	1.6	1.5

Those 25-34 years old have also declined, but not as dramatically, from ten years ago.

And those 35-44 have grown the most as a group. Almost three-fourths of all U.S. journalists are 25 to 44 years old, compared with two-thirds a decade ago.

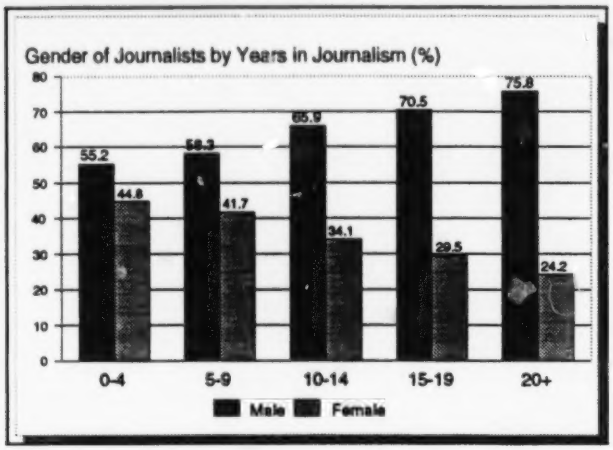
Those 55-64 years old have continued to decline since 1971, suggesting relatively fewer "elders" in American journalism now as compared with the early 1970s. Whether that will change much in the next decade as many of those in the large 35-54 group exceed 55 depends on how many stay in journalism. We do know from our survey that 21 percent of all journalists say they would like to be working outside the news media in five years, compared to 11 percent in 1982-83 and only 7 percent in 1971.

One thing that has not changed much in American journalism, to our surprise, is the percentage of women working for all different news media combined. In spite of rapidly increasing enrollments of women in U.S. journalism schools during the 1980s, and the emphasis on hiring women since the late 70s, the overall percentage of women has remained virtually unchanged.

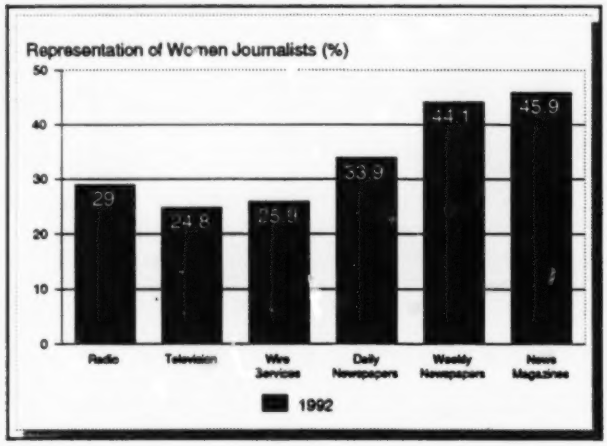


When those journalists with less than five years experience are considered, it's clear that the percentage of women is much higher (about 45%). It is also higher for those with five to nine years experience, although not as much so (about 42%). But because the growth rate in American journalism has been so small during the past decade, and because there are far fewer women than men with 15 years or more experience, these increased percentages of women hired during the past decade have not changed the overall percentage of women in American journalism from 1982 to 1992. It appears that women have been successful in rising within the ranks of their organizations, as 42 percent of them say they have some supervisory responsibility for

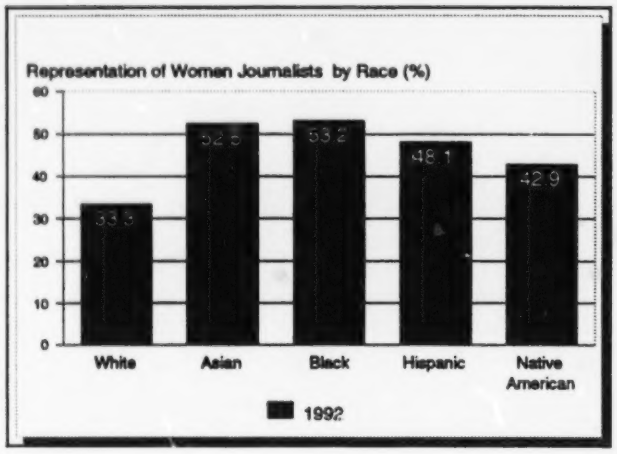
news-editorial staff, a figure that is identical to that for their male colleagues. We think these findings show that editors and news directors have been successful in hiring and promoting more women during the 1980s, but this success has not been reflected in the overall proportions of women.



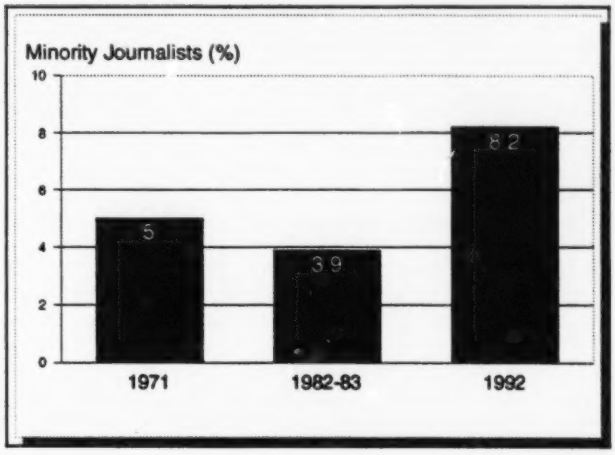
Of course, the percentage of women journalists varies tremendously by medium, from about one-fourth in the wire services and television to nearly one-half in weekly newspapers and news magazines. Obviously, some news media have done better than others in hiring women.



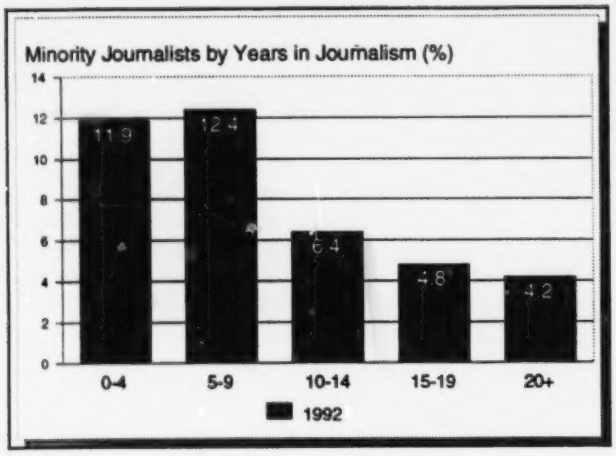
The proportion of women journalists also varies considerably by race, with all minority groups (especially Asians, Blacks and Hispanics) represented by more women than the White majority group. This suggests that increased emphasis on hiring minority journalists is likely to increase the representation of women at the same time.

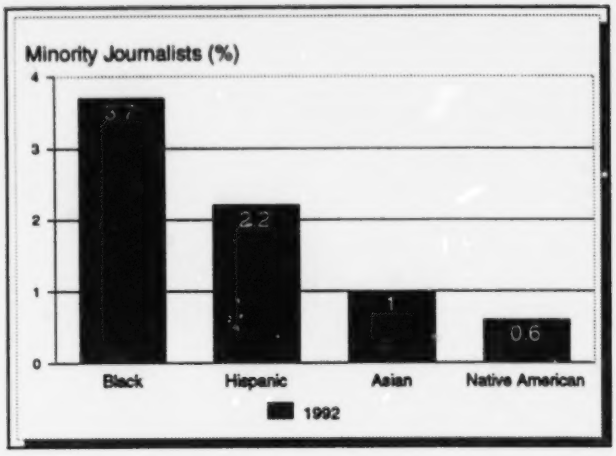


But although minority journalists can boast significantly higher percentages of women journalists than their White counterparts, it's clear that the proportion of minorities in American journalism is still not equal to their proportions in the overall population. There has been some increase during the past decade, but the 8.2 percentage for 1992 still lags far behind the 24 percent estimated by the 1990 U.S. Census.

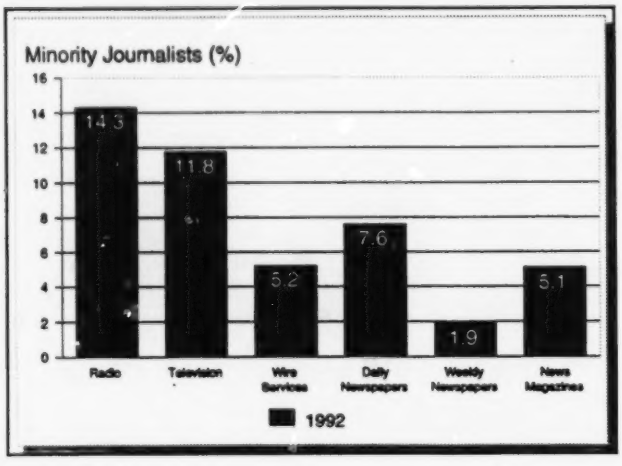


Again, if only those journalists hired during the past decade are considered, the overall percentage of minorities is considerably higher than 8.2%, suggesting that there have been increased efforts, and some success, in minority hiring during the 1980s. But the percentage drops off sharply for those journalists with 10 or more years of experience, probably because of less emphasis on minority hiring during the 1960s and 70s, and possibly because more minorities are leaving journalism after 10 years on the job.



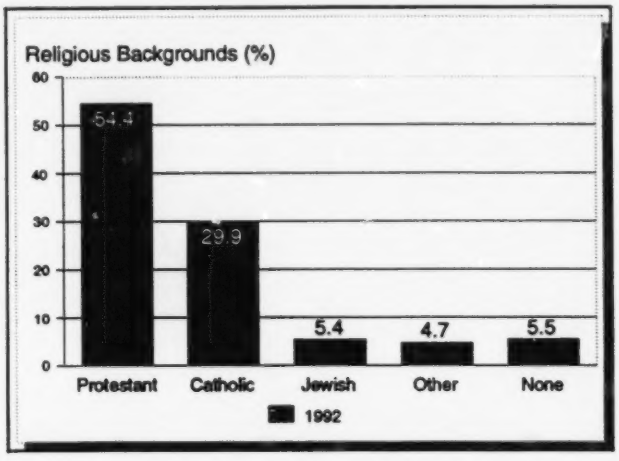


As with women, some media have done better than others in recruiting full-time minority journalists, most notably radio and television, and some have done much worse. It is fairly certain that the very low percentage of minorities working on weekly newspapers reflects the fact that most minorities live in larger urban areas, but the same cannot be said for news magazines and wire services.



In 1992, Black Americans are the most numerous minority journalists, whereas Native Americans are the least common. When these percentages are projected to the total population of full-time mainstream news media, we estimate about 4,500 Black journalists, 2,700 Hispanic journalists, 1,200 Asians, and only 730 Native Americans. It should be remembered that these projections do not include special interest or ethnic media, or any non-news magazines, so they are very conservative numbers.

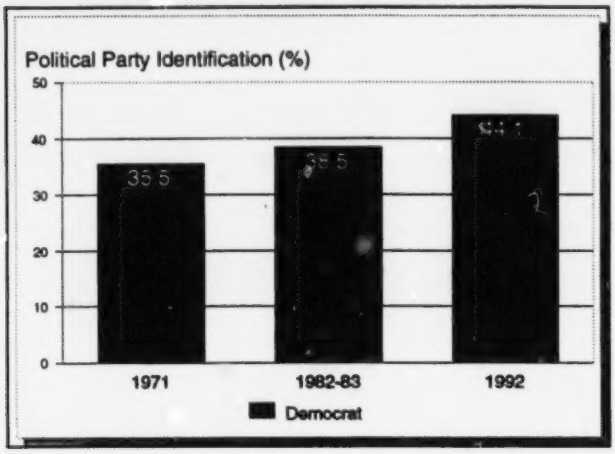
In terms of religious backgrounds, U.S. journalists have not changed much in the past decade, and they reflect the overall population fairly closely. There has been a drop of about 5 percentage points in Protestants, an increase in Catholics of 3 points, and an increase in "other" or "none" of about 3.5 points.

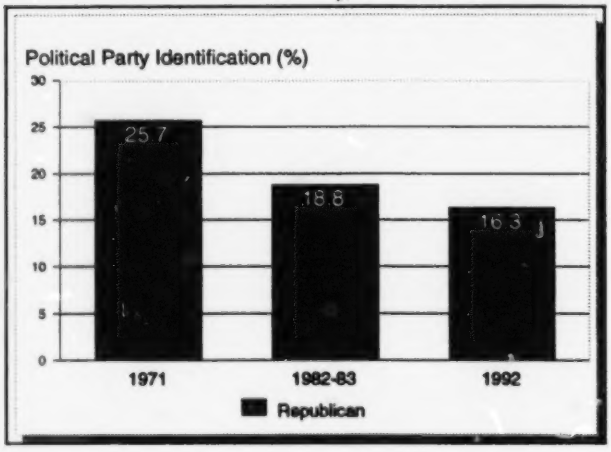


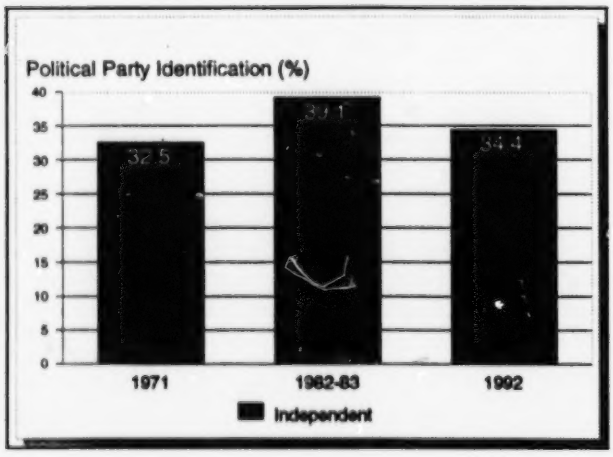
Although there hasn't been much change in religious backgrounds of U.S. journalists in the past decade, there has been a notable change in political party preference, with more journalists identifying themselves as Democrats, and slightly fewer saying they are Republicans. The proportion calling themselves Independents has also dropped a bit.

When compared to the overall U.S. population, journalists are 5 to 10 percentage points more likely to say they are Democrats, and 10 to 15 points less likely to say they are Republicans, depending on which poll you use as a measure of the overall U.S. adult population's party preference. The percentage of

journalists claiming to be Independents is very close to the overall population percentage.



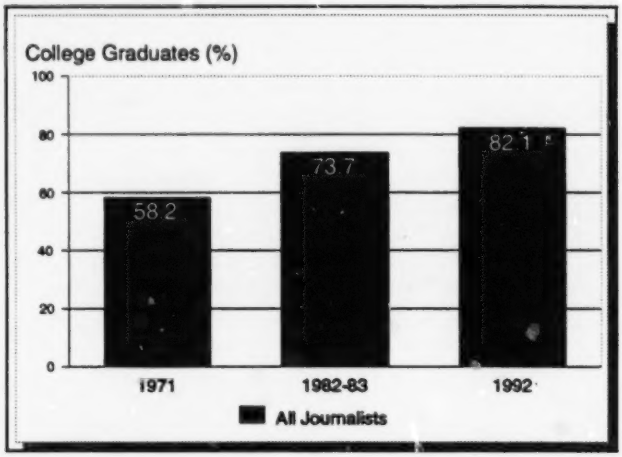


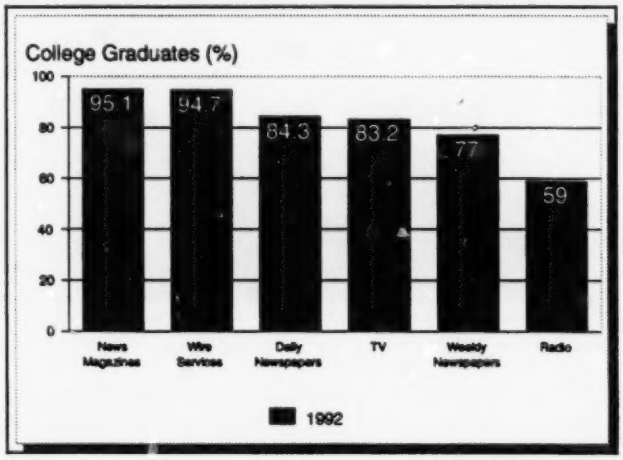


Part of the increase in journalists identifying with the Democratic Party comes from the increase in minorities in U.S. journalism. In general, minorities are much more likely to call themselves Democrats than are White journalists, especially Blacks (70%), Asians (63%) and Hispanics (59%). There is also a wide gender gap for political party identification, with women journalists (58%) being much more likely than men (38%) to prefer the Democratic Party. Men are the most likely (40%) of all groups to say they are Independents.

Educational Backgrounds of Journalists

The percentage of U.S. journalists with at least a college bachelor's degree continues to increase, especially among journalists working for news magazines and wire services.

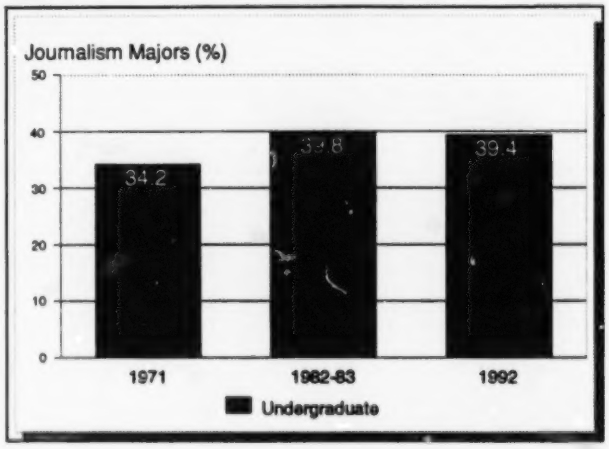




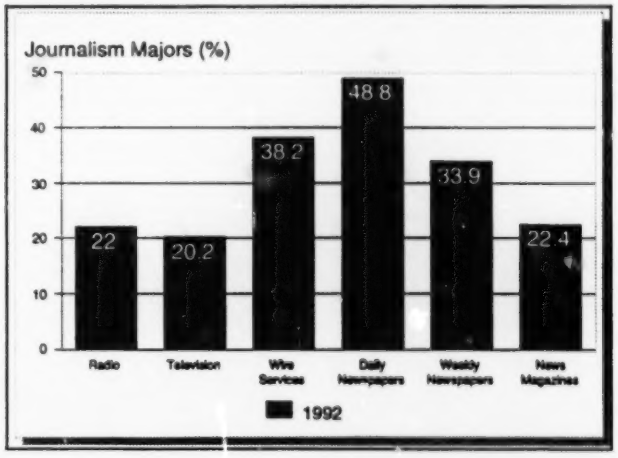
It's clear that the bachelor's degree has become the minimum qualification necessary for practicing journalism in all media, even radio, which has about the same percentage of college graduates now as existed in U.S. journalism overall in 1971.

But the college degree with a major in journalism is still not held by a majority of U.S. full-time journalists, despite the large numbers of journalism school students graduating in the 1980s. In fact, there has been no change overall in the percentage of college graduates

who majored in journalism during the past decade, probably because of the very slow growth in number of mainstream journalism jobs and the aging of journalists. But when those who majored, minored, or took college classes in journalism are summed, the percentage rises from 39.4 to 62.3, nearly two-thirds who have been exposed to journalism education in college.

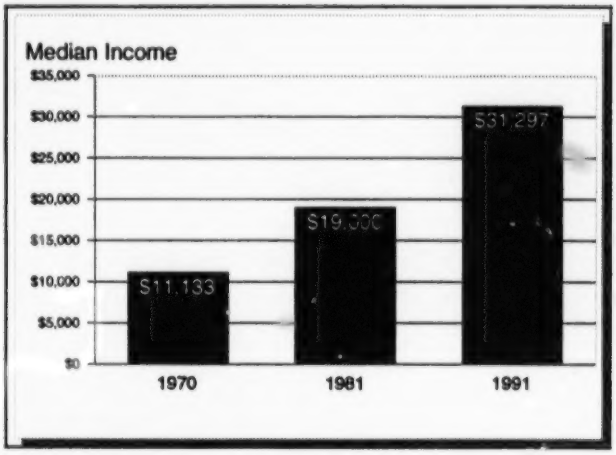


Only in daily newspapers is the journalism degree becoming almost the norm. Wire services and weekly newspapers are not too far behind. But radio, television and news magazine journalists are far less likely to hold journalism degrees, which may partly account for why they often seem to be the most critical of journalism education.

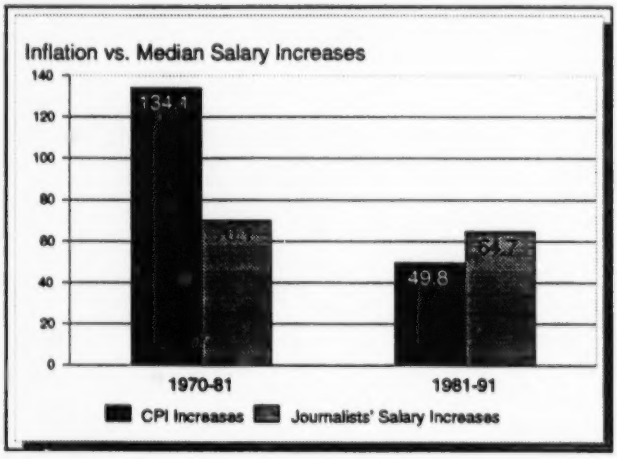


Working Conditions of Journalists

One of the most important working conditions is, of course, salary. Our findings indicate that the median income of full-time journalists has increased from $19,000 in 1981 (the year just before our 1982-83 study) to $31,297 last year (1991). This is less than income estimates for other somewhat comparable occupational groups, such as internal auditors and accountants.[4]

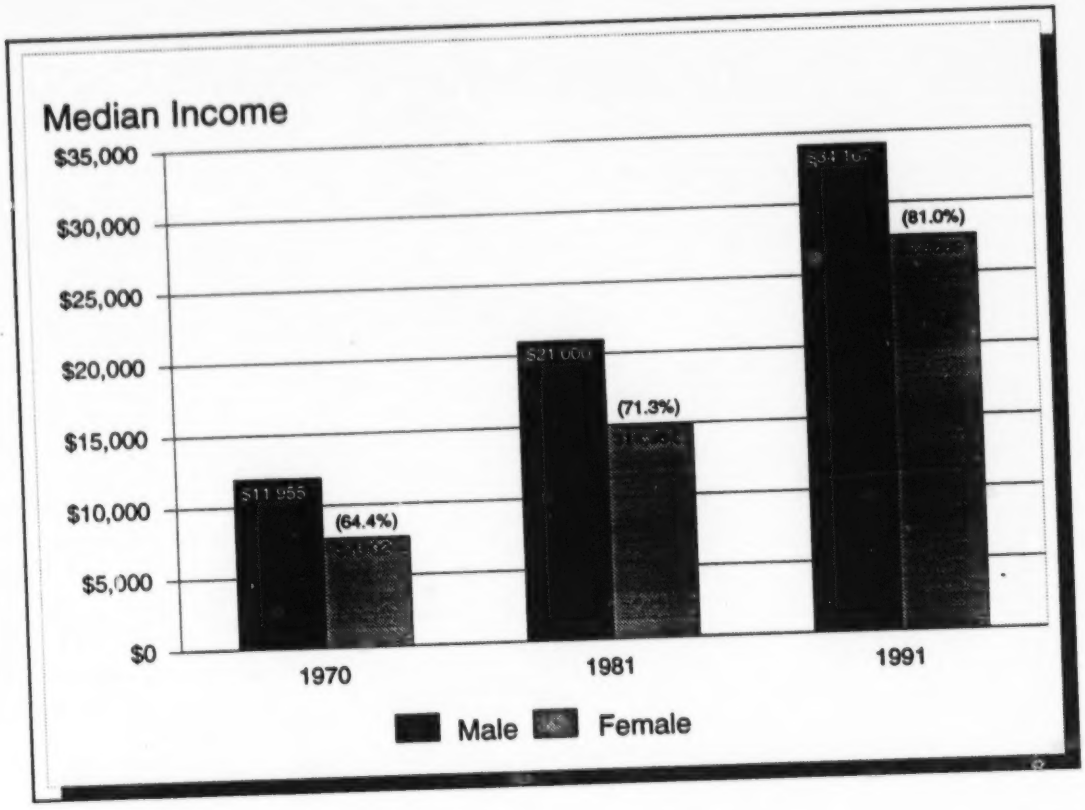


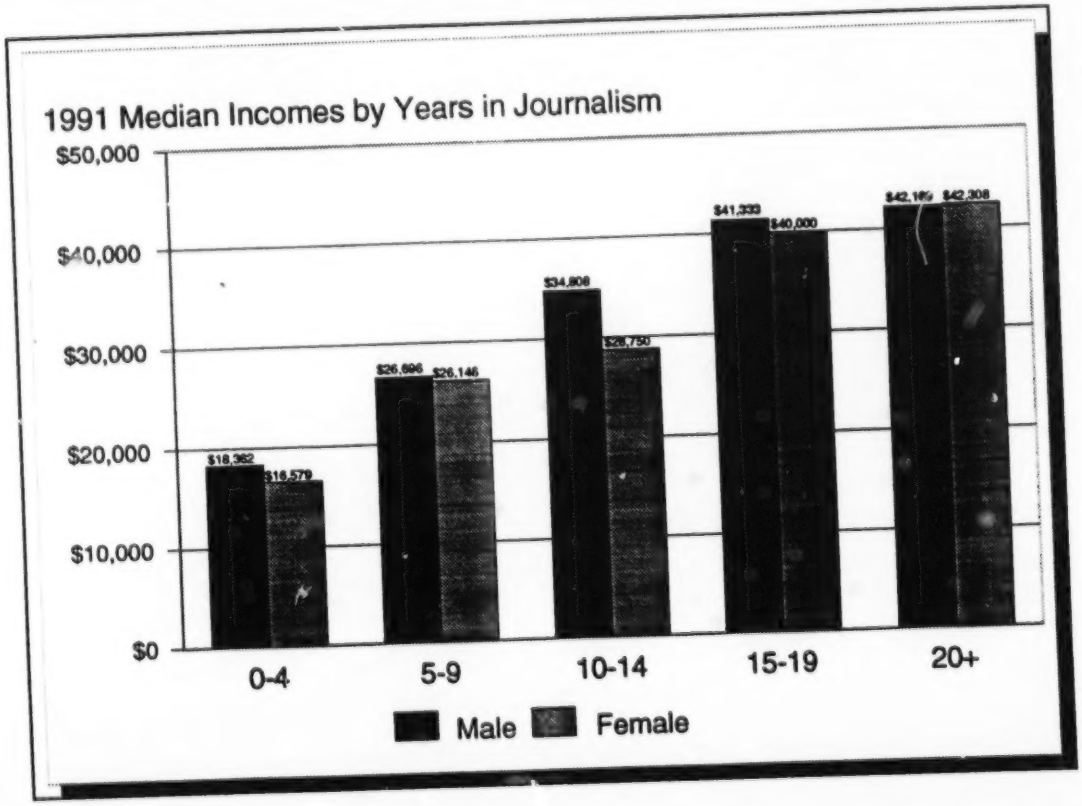
A decline in the rate of inflation over the last decade enabled the increase in journalists' incomes to exceed the rise in the Consumer Price Index. But this progress in salary did not restore journalists' relative buying power to its level in the late 1960s.



One of the encouraging findings in our 1982-83 study was that the salary gap between men and women had decreased somewhat since 1970. From 1981 to 1991, that gap decreased even more than in the previous decade. Overall median salaries for women are now 81 percent of those for men, compared to 64 percent in 1970. (See chart on next page.)

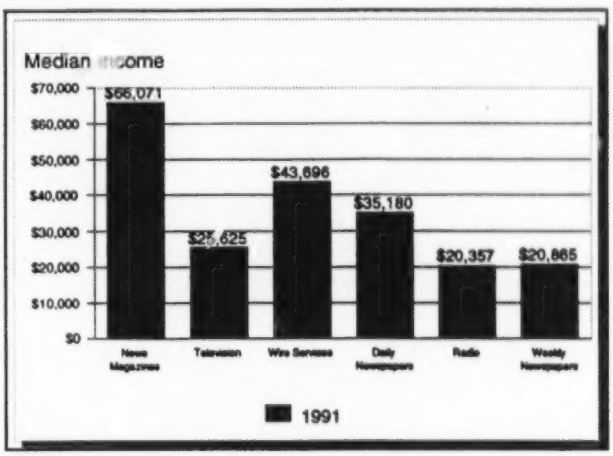
When years of experience in journalism is considered, the gender gap in income nearly disappears. There is a notable gap among journalists of 10 to 14 years experience. While we have no ready explanation for that difference, it is true that women with four years or less experience tend to work for slightly smaller news organizations than do men, helping to explain the small salary gap for the most recently hired journalists. (See chart on next page.)


Median Income
$35,000
$30,000
$25,000
$20,000
$15,000
$10,000
$5,000
$0
(64.4%)
(71.3%)
(81.0%)
1970
1981
1991
Male
Female

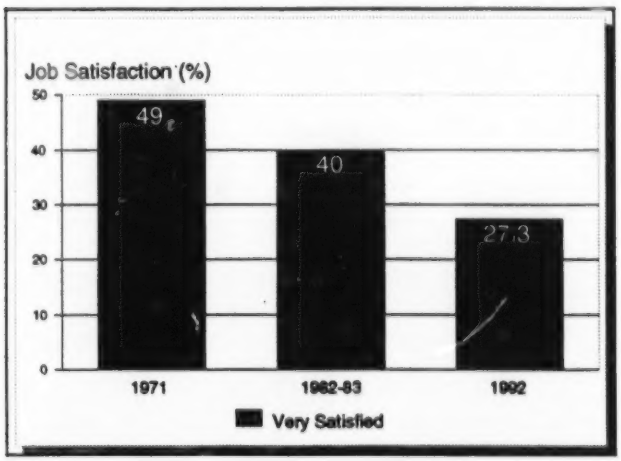

1991 Median Incomes by Years in Journalism
$50,000
$40,000
$30,000
$20,000
$10,000
$0
$18,382
$16,579
$26,696
$26,146
$34,808
$26,750
$41,333
$40,000
$42,199
$42,308
0-4
5-9
10-14
15-19
20+
Male
Female

And when a variety of predictors of income are controlled statistically (such as professional age, type of medium, size of news organization, managerial responsibilities, race, ownership of news organization, presence of a journalists union, region of country, and education level), gender predicts less than one percent of the variation in pay. There is no income gap by race of journalist, except for Native Americans, who make substantially less than others primarily because they work for very small news operations.

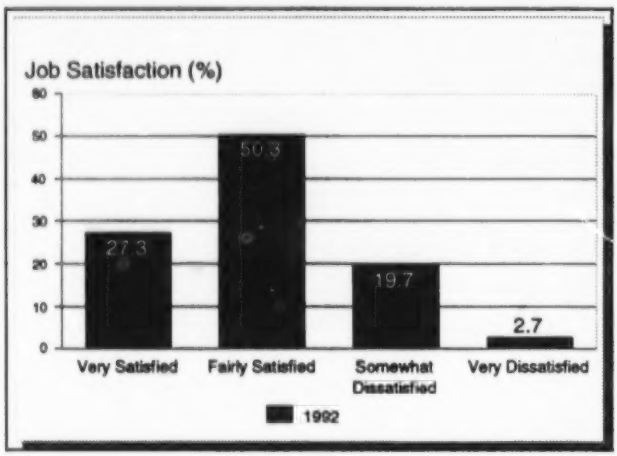
Considerable differences in salary are found in the various news media. Journalists at news magazines and the wire services earn the most, and those at radio stations and weekly newspapers earn the least.[5] Not surprisingly, those at the largest organizations and those with the most experience tend to make the highest salaries.



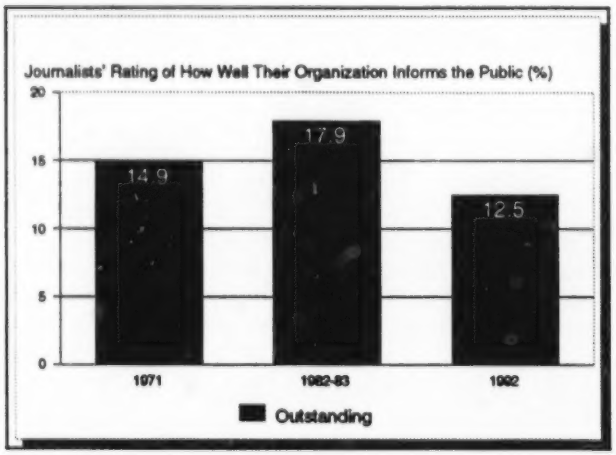
Traditionally, journalists -- despite considerable concern about pay scales -- have ranked high on job satisfaction. That appears to be changing.



Only 27 percent say they are very satisfied with their job, compared to almost half saying that 20 years ago. A majority in 1991 are at least fairly satisfied, but the overall decline in job happiness is considerable, with Black and Asian journalists being the least likely to say they are very satisfied. The profile is somewhat less favorable than the picture of job attitudes for some other professions, such as college professors.[6]

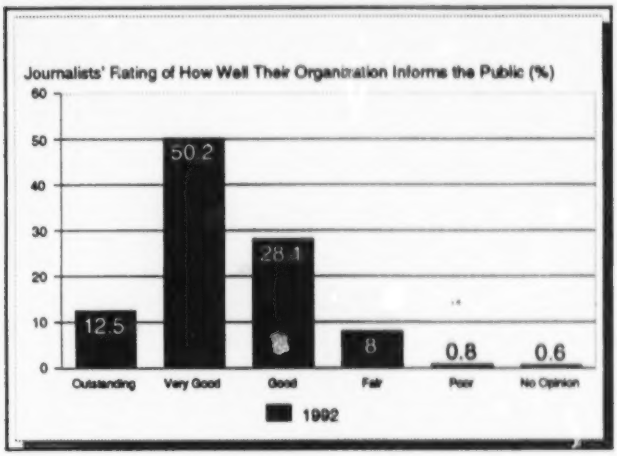


One of the most significant predictors of job satisfaction is the extent to which journalists see their organization as informing their audience. There is a slight change in that estimate, with fewer journalists saying now that their newsroom is doing an outstanding job of informing the public, especially Blacks and Asians. Reasons for this range from low quality of staff (being complacent or not aggressive enough) to limited resources.



The general picture, however, suggests most journalists do rate their organization as good or very good on informing the public. Those who are most positive are journalists for wire services, who cite high quality of editors and staff, and speed of news coverage. The least favorable ratings on informing the public are

from television journalists, who mention small size of staff and limited resources.



A majority of journalists now say the editorial policies of their organization (68%) are very important in how they rate their job, an increase of 10 percentage points over the decade. Journalists in the print media are more likely to say editorial policies are important than are their colleagues in the broadcast media, and Native Americans are much more likely to say that editorial policies are very important.

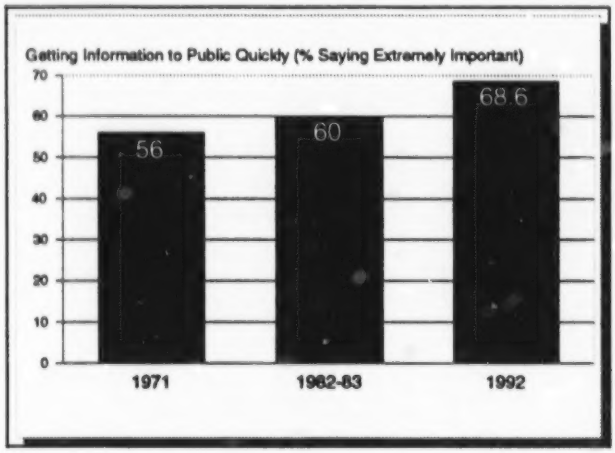
The chance to help people remains a very important aspect of news work for a majority (61%), but altruism is somewhat more apt to be cited by journalists in broadcasting and on weekly newspapers than in other media, and especially by minority journalists. Job security (61%) and the extent of their autonomy (52%) also are very important in how journalists rate their jobs. As in the past, though, fringe benefits and pay are much less likely than other factors to be cited as very important to rating a job in journalism.

Our earlier study suggested that the number of journalists who planned to leave the field had increased, and that disgruntlement tended to be most visible among the more experienced and altruistic persons. The trend continues in the 1990s, as 21% of the sample -- almost double that of 1981-82 -- say they plan to leave the field during the next five years mainly because of limited pay and the need for a change or a new challenge. Asian journalists are least likely (11%) to say they plan to leave journalism, and Native Americans are most likely to say this (29%).

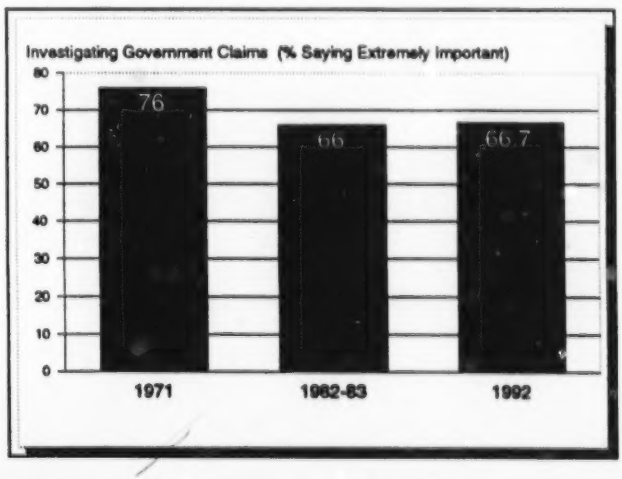
The journalists in our sample were asked a battery of 11 questions about the importance of various aspects of the possible roles of the news media. Specifically, each journalist responded to questions such as this: "How important is it for the news media to get information to the public quickly?"

For the most part, the perceptions of journalistic role are broadly similar to those a decade ago. Journalists tend to see their responsibilities as pluralistic, with wide majorities agreeing that there is at least *some* importance for roles as disparate as surveillance and entertainment. The focus of the analysis, then, is on assessing which roles are seen as *most* important.

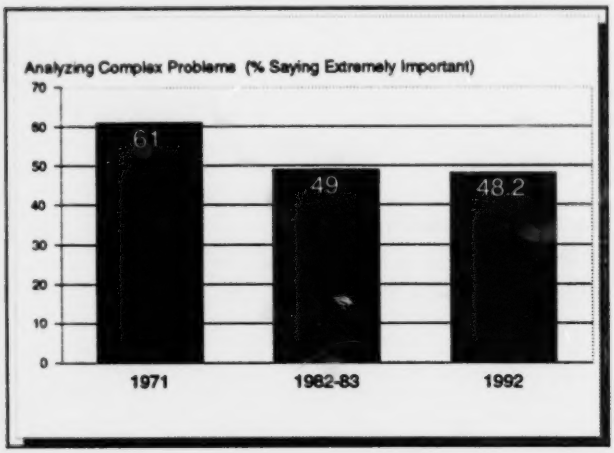
Two journalistic responsibilities are seen as extremely important by a majority: Getting information to the public quickly (69%) and investigating government claims (67%). There is no significant difference by race or gender on these journalistic roles, except that Native Americans are much less concerned about getting information to the public quickly.



Compared to a decade ago, journalists are somewhat more likely to rank their role in providing information quickly as extremely important. Television and wire service journalists are much more likely to rank the information function higher than are persons in other media. Investigating the claims of government, which dropped in salience in the early 1980s, is unchanged in relative importance and is ranked about the same by staff on all media except radio. Journalists working for radio stations are much less likely to see this as a responsibility.

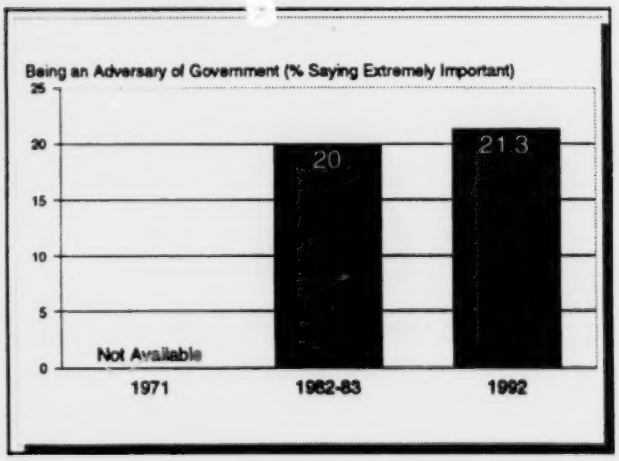


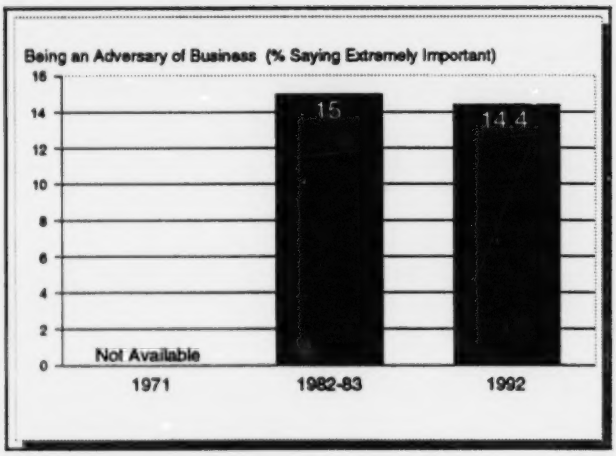
The analytical function of news media -- providing analysis of complex problems -- also remains about the same, at 48 percent saying it is extremely important. Journalists for the news magazines and daily newspapers are much more likely than news workers in other media to see analysis of complex problems as highly salient. Asian and Black journalists are also more likely to rate this role as extremely important.



Amidst the post-Watergate climate of our earlier study, the question of journalists' perceptions of the importance of an aggressive stance toward government was of particular interest. We found the adversarial role was considered less salient in the minds of journalists in 1982-83 than many critics expected. Similar results are found in the 1992 survey.

Only a small minority of journalists see the adversary role -- directed at either government or business -- as extremely important. Print journalists, in general, are more likely to be adversarial than are their broadcast colleagues. Asians and Blacks are also more likely than other groups to rate the adversary role as extremely important.

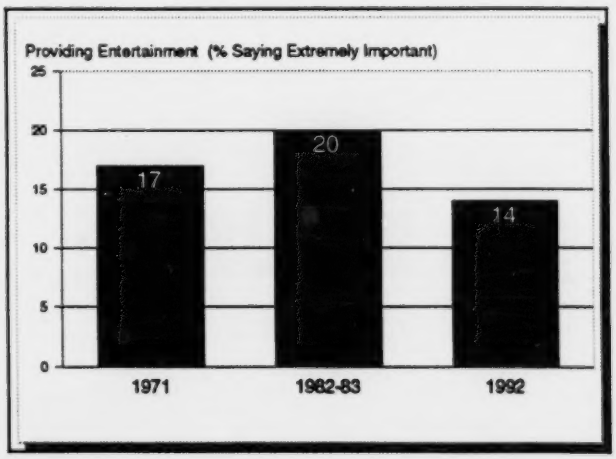




In the most recent study, a new question attempts to assess journalistic initiative in setting the political agenda, a topic that has received much attention over the last decade. Few journalists see their role in these terms, with only 4 percent ranking it extremely important and 41 percent rejecting it entirely. But three of the four minority groups (Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans) are more likely to say this is an extremely important role. Even among these groups, however, only about 10 percent see setting the political agenda as extremely important.

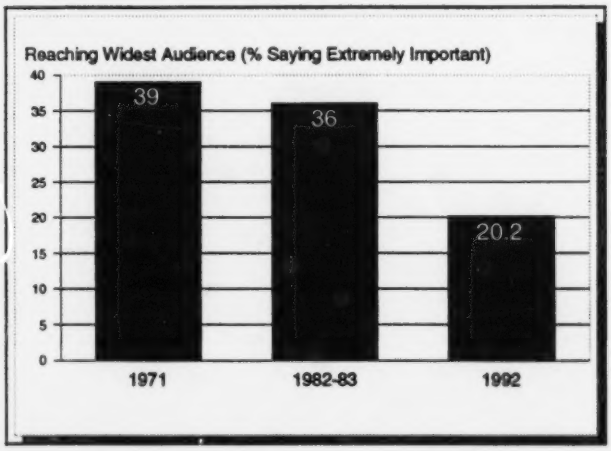
Another issue of currency is the extent to which journalists should attempt to give ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs. A little less than half of the sample say this is an extremely important role. Those working on daily and weekly newspapers are most likely to rate this as extremely important.

As some prominent journalists join the critics in claiming that mainstream journalists are sometimes guilty of yielding too easily to the marketing values on the business side, our findings on the perceptions of the

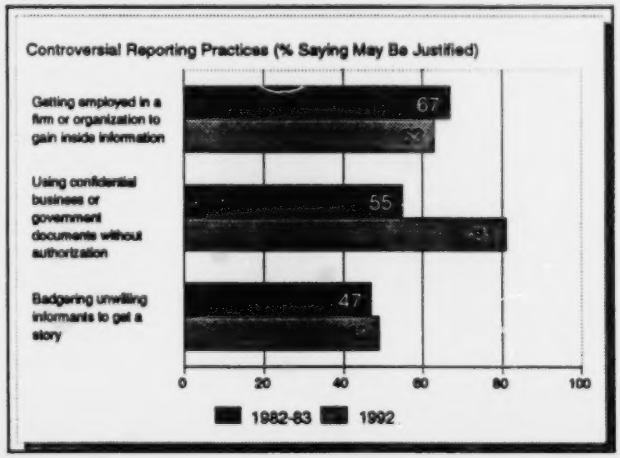


importance of entertainment are interesting. Fewer journalists now than a decade ago -- especially among those in broadcasting -- are willing to admit that entertainment is important to news organizations.

The effect of cable services and other new media in fragmenting the mass audience into specialized markets may explain one of the major shifts in journalists' perception of their work. When asked about the importance of trying to reach the widest possible audience, only a small percentage -- significantly fewer than 10 years ago -- now agree that the pursuit is extremely important. Black journalists, however, are the most likely to say this.

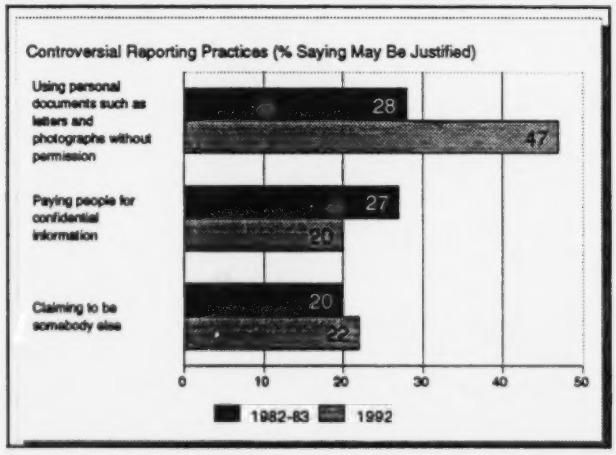


One of the most significant aspects of contemporary public debate about mainstream news media is questioning of the ethics of various reporting practices. This is an especially troublesome area for survey research because of the difficulty of asking a respondent to evaluate a reporting tactic that is removed from the context of a news story on which "it depends." Our study asks journalists to consider nine practices individually and to say whether they may be justified on occasion, or whether these practices would not be approved under any circumstance.



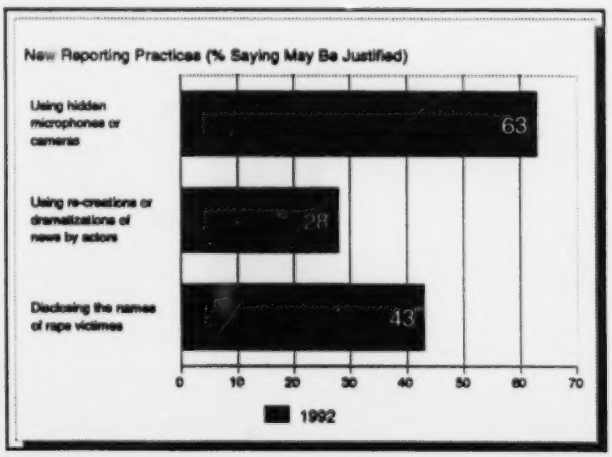
The results suggest a slight decline in the number of journalists saying undercover reporting may be justified, but show a substantial increase in the tolerance of using unauthorized business and government documents. Daily newspaper and wire service journalists are significantly more likely than others to justify the use of unauthorized documents, as are Asian journalists in general. Native Americans are the least likely to approve of this practice.

The change in the willingness of journalists to envision a circumstance for using confidential documents probably reflects a greater awareness of problems of government secrecy and the difficulty of access to computerized data bases. But there is a similar pattern about the use of *personal* documents and letters without permission.



There is a significant decline in the willingness to pay sources for information. Black journalists are the most likely to say that this practice may be justified on occasion, but only 30 percent of them say this.

In our 1992 study, journalists are also queried about some recent reporting practices that have been widely debated.



Not surprisingly, it is television journalists who are much more likely to justify using hidden microphones or cameras. The use of re-creations or dramatizations is tolerated by a minority, again with broadcast journalists being more likely to tolerate these techniques.

None of the practices assessed by the study is more complicated ethically than the question about disclosing the names of rape victims. It is the print journalist who is more likely to be among the substantial minority saying that publishing the names of victims may be justified under some circumstances. Surprisingly, male and female journalists showed identical stances on this question, but Native Americans were much less likely to agree with this practice.

Conclusions

This massive data set of extensive interviews with more than 1,400 journalists has much more open-ended narrative from the respondents than our previous study. Much of that rich material is yet to be analyzed, and there remains considerable statistical analysis on all the questions. Our results, then, must be viewed as a preview from which conclusions are to be read with caution.

Some broad-stroke, tentative conclusions follow.

The substantial growth in numbers of journalists working for the media that characterized the 1970s has stalled. In spite of that, media organizations appear to have made some progress in attracting minorities. A minority workforce of 8 percent, up from 4 percent in our 1982-83 study, by no means indicates sufficient diversity in American newsrooms, but it is in the right direction.

Stalled growth in media employment appears to have affected the representation of women, as they are at the same percentage of the workforce (34%) as a decade ago. We suspect the problem is one of retention, as well as very limited growth in new jobs, because there is evidence of greater parity of representation of men and women at the entry levels of journalism.

The median age of journalists, now 36, has risen and is about the same as it was before the rapid influx of large numbers of young, entry-level employees in the 1970s. Professional identity appears to have declined, however, with a smaller minority of the workforce belonging to journalism organizations than in 1982-83.

Salaries have improved, with increases outpacing inflation over the decade. The median figure of $31,297 for the typical journalist, however, is still below pay levels of other somewhat comparable occupations. The salary gap between men and women has narrowed greatly, and none exists for the major minority groups (except Native Americans) in the field.

A serious problem of retention may be just over the horizon. More than 20 percent of those surveyed said they plan to leave the field within five years, double the figure of 1982-83. This is tied to a significant decline in job satisfaction, with complaints about pay and the need for a different challenge being the major reasons for plans to leave.

Overall differences in ideas about journalistic roles and reporting practices, while not great overall, seem to be related more strongly to working for a particular medium than was the case a decade ago. And, in the 1992 results, gender and racial differences appear to account for many fewer differences than do the types of news media for which journalists work.

Changes in media audiences appear to be reflected in a perception among journalists that reaching the largest number of people in the audience is not as important as it was a decade ago. Speed in getting the news to the public -- likely a reflection of new technology's capacity for immediacy -- has become more salient. Investigating government claims remains a high value. On the other hand, there is a tendency to downplay entertainment as an important aspect of the news.

While recognizing the importance of the adversary role, journalists do not see it as their highest responsibility. In fact, there is evidence that journalists display considerable caution about playing an activist role in their news work. The idea of setting the policy agenda of the nation and their communities is *not* one they see as very salient to their job as journalists.

On the other hand, there seems to be recognition that some aggressive reporting practices may be more acceptable in an environment of government secrecy and the ease with which access to information is affected by computerized data bases. Use of confidential government, business, and personal documents now is seen as justifiable on occasion by an increasing majority of journalists.

There is about an even split on some complicated issues, such as whether a rape victim's name may be published, but, as in many other aspects of journalism, gender (and race, for the most part) is not related to the position on the question. On one dimension, political party allegiance, both gender and race are pertinent. While more journalists now see themselves as Democrats than in the 1982-83 study, it is among women and minorities that the Democrats are strongest. Perhaps more important, however, is the perception by typical journalists that the *organization* for which they

work -- regardless of their personal predilections -- is middle-of-the-road politically.

Any robust conclusions about racial differences must wait for further analysis, but there are some hints. It appears that the Blacks and Hispanics are closer to the Whites in overall perceptions of the field than are the Asians and Native Americans. The Native Americans, who tend to work for much smaller media that are more separate from mainstream journalism, are the most different on many issues. The Asians, in the main, are much more satisfied in the field, with significantly fewer planning to change jobs than among the rest of the workforce. They also appear somewhat more likely to accept a more aggressive role for journalists, while the Native Americans appear much more cautious.

More detailed analysis of these findings, and the reasons for them, will appear in our forthcoming book, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*.

Notes

1. John W. C. Johnstone, Edward J. Slawski, and William W. Bowman, *The News People: A Sociological Portrait of American Journalists and Their Work* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1976).

2. David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, *The American Journalist: A Portrait of U.S. News People and Their Work* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986; Second Edition, 1991).

3. These directories include the 1991 *Editor & Publisher International Year Book*, *The Broadcasting Yearbook 1991*, the 1991 *Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media*, and the Summer 1991 *News Media Yellow Book of Washington and New York*. We used systematic random sampling to compile lists of 181 daily newspapers (stratified by circulation), 128 weekly newspapers, 17 news magazines, 28 wire service bureaus, 121 radio stations, and 99 television stations, for a total of 574 separate news organizations. Unlike the earlier studies, we did include photojournalists and network television journalists.

4. The mean salary for non-supervisory management accountants in 1990 was $37,000. It was $36,800 for internal auditors. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (May 1992), Bulletin 2400, p. 17. The mean 1991 salary for all full-time U.S. journalists is $31,500, according to the data from our national probability sample of 1,156.

5. The salary estimates for television journalists appear fairly close to those found by Vernon A. Stone, "News Salaries Stand Still," in *Communicator* (February 1992), pp. 14-15. Stone's estimates of median TV salaries in 1991: reporters, $20,000; producers, $21,000, anchors, $34,500, and news directors, $45,000. Our estimates for radio appear to be higher than Stone's. He found these median salaries for radio: reporters, $13,620; anchors, $17,810, and news directors, $17,810.

6. Susan H. Russell et al., *Profiles of Faculty in Higher Education Institutions, 1988* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, August 1991), p. 75.